

POPULATION GROWTH OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1790 TO 1900

The director of the census announces the publication at an early date of a census volume entitled "The First Census of the United States: 1790," prepared by W. S. Rossiter, chief clerk of the census. It is supplemented to the series of pamphlets containing the names of the heads of families at the first census, which have been issued recently by the census, and the sale of which has demonstrated how general the demand is for data dealing with the early days of the republic. No charge is attached to the distribution of the present volume. This report is unique among census publications. It contains a discussion of the conditions of the republic at the period of the first federal census; presents the history of census taking in the United States in colonial days (these early enumerations being among the first efforts of census taking in any country); gives the results in detail of all colonial censuses; discusses the origin of the first federal census and the debates in the first congress over the law authorizing the census; and presents for the first time the complete results of the census, with much material from the original schedule of the first census, which, under the application of modern census methods of research and tabulation, reveals many facts not before available. The discussion extends even to the names of the people, and a study is made of the distribution of family names in the different localities.

The original schedule for eleven of the seventeen states and territories comprising the United States in 1790 are in existence as part of the archives of the census bureau.

The volume will contain approximately 250 pages, lithographic maps of the northern and southern states, and of cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia at the close of the eighteenth century, and many sketch maps and diagrams.

The report consists of two parts. The first deals with colonial enumerations of the United States prior to 1790, and the origin and history of the first census, and comprises six chapters, as follows:

- I. Population in the colonial and continental periods.
- II. Census prior to 1790.
- III. Recent estimates of population prior to 1790.
- IV. Population of cities.
- V. United States in 1790.
- VI. The first census.

The second part presents in detail the returns of the first census, compared with similar figures for 1900 and for other dates during the century which has elapsed since the first census. These returns and com-

parisons are embraced in six chapters:

- I. General tables.
- II. Color, sex, and age.
- III. Comparison of the changes in the original and added area.
- IV. Statistics of families.
- V. Statistics of slaves.
- VI. Nationality and nomenclature.

Population of the Colonies.

Thirty-eight enumerations of the various colonies were made in all, but no enumeration embraced all the colonies. In several, indeed, no accurate count of population occurred during the entire colonial period.

Growth in Two Centuries From 200 to 3,900,000.

The first population in a decennial year (which may be regarded as continuous) was that of Virginia, in 1610, consisting of 200 souls maintaining a precarious foothold upon an unexplored continent; after the lapse of approximately two centuries, there was an aggregate population of 3,900,000 occupying more than 800,000 square miles of territory. In 1650 more than half of the inhabitants were in the New England colonies and most of the remainder in Virginia; but from that date the proportion in New England steadily declined, and the proportion in the southern colonies increased.

Colonial Population of Cities.

Three cities—New York, Philadelphia, and Boston—have continued to the present time to be leaders, not only in the number of their inhabitants, but also in prosperity and influence. From its foundation in 1630 until the middle of the eighteenth century, Boston was the most populous town in the American colonies. Philadelphia (including suburbs) then took the lead, which it retained until it in turn was passed by New York, after the establishment of constitutional government. Hence each of these three cities at some period has been the leader in population.

All of the great area lying south of the Potomac must be regarded as having been distinctly rural in the colonial period. In North Carolina, one of the larger commonwealths, even as late as 1790 no community existed in which the population exceeded 2000 inhabitants.

In 1700 the aggregate population of the three leading cities—Boston, New York and Philadelphia—was approximately 15,500. Ninety years later the aggregate population of the three cities was 95,000, having increased sixfold. In 1900 the population of the three cities mentioned was 5,291,791. An increase of 80,000 in the first century of existence is therefore to be compared with an increase of 5,200,000 in the second.

Statistics of the First Census and Comparison With Later Censuses.

The tables and text which appear in this report form the first systematic analysis of the returns of the first census of the United States. Comparisons have been made, especially with 1900, in order to show a century of change, and also in some instances with the returns at intermediate censuses where the facts have proved to be especially significant.

Nineteenfold Increase of Population in Century.

The population of the United States increased nineteenfold from 1790 to 1900; and nearly tenfold in the area enumerated at the first census. The increase of the New England states has been slightly more than fivefold, that of the middle states fifteenfold, and of the southern states a little more than sixfold.

Living Links Between the First and Twelfth Censuses.

Of 3,171,000 white persons enumerated in 1790, approximately two million survived thirty years later. In 1850, 820,000 survived; in 1880, 11,500 and in 1900, 23 persons, reporting their ages as 110 years and over, still survived. It is possible therefore, that at the twelfth census there were still living persons enumerated in the first census, taken 110 years before.

County Areas in 1790 and 1900 Made Comparable.

At the first census there were but 272 counties in the entire area enumerated. This number increased within the same area in 1900 to 785. In order to determine what the changes in population have been in the counties enumerated in 1790 the area was made comparable by combining those parts of modern counties which were included in the counties enumerated at the first census. The results are shown both in maps and tables of population.

Cities and Towns Increase in Number From 2000 to 11,064.

In 1790 the number of cities, towns, and villages specified at the first census in the states for which such information was presented was 1552. The number in the same area had increased in 1900 to 5467. In the southern states a compilation appearing in the report indicates that there were 431 cities, towns, and villages in 1790. In 1900 the number was 6174.

Cities Increase Their Population Fifty-Five Fold From 1790 to 1900.

At the first census but six cities reported a population of approximately 8000 inhabitants. Compared with this number, in 1900 there were 286 cities and towns in the same area having a population of 8000 or

more. In Rhode Island alone, the smallest of all the states, there were more cities of 8000 inhabitants than there were in the United States in 1790.

The aggregate population of all cities in the area enumerated in 1790 which in 1900 reported more than 50,000 inhabitants, was 185,207 in 1790, and 10,259,186 in 1900.

Although the total population of the United States increased rapidly from 1790 to 1900, the relative population weight of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore increased even more rapidly. In 1790 their combined population was but little more than 100,000 and formed but 2.4 per cent of the population of the republic; but in 1900 it was approximately 6,000,000, or nearly 58 times as great as in 1790, and formed 7.6 per cent of the population of the Republic. The population in 1900 of the area actually enumerated as comprising these four cities in 1790 was 590,699, or a sixfold increase of population within the original city limits.

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